the regional level to encourage smaller NGOs to take up project with CAPART.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Investment Trend in Rural Areas

4848. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared in 'India Rural Development Report 1999' recently;

(b) if so, the salient features of the report;

(c) whether Government have noticed that there are disturbing trends of investment in the rural areas which is declining over the years in various States;

(d) if so, the total percentage of investment which is to be made for rural development at present; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to boost such investments?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad, an organisation of the Ministry of Rural Development, Prepared the India Rural Development Report, 1999.

(b) The salient features of the report are:

(i) Over the years, poverty has declined from 56.44 per cent in 1973-74 to 37.27 per cent in 1993-94. The regions in Western part of country had relatively lower incidence of poverty than central and eastern zones.

(ii) Though SC&ST and women headed households are significantly poorer than other, the gap has narrowed down in rural areas.

(iii) Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh account for 51 per cent of the country's poor. If Assam, Orissa, West Bengal and some Union Territories are added, these States account for over 70 per cent of poor in the country.

(iv) Majority of poor are concentrated around the poverty line which is a source of comfort in the sense that with a little focussed

effort, a significant proportion of the poor can be brought above poverty line.

(v) Improvement in irrigation facilities, land productivity and agricultural wages will improve the levels of living of rural people. The key to poverty reduction lies in efforts to raise agricultural growth, investments in social and other infrastructure and human capital formation.

(vi) Social development and infrastructure development help in reducing poverty and therefore investments in such areas should be stepped up.

(vii) Environmental degradation contributes to poverty and therefore people's involvement in management of environment is essential for ecological restoration.

(viii) GoI allocation for Rural Development has been steadily increasing over the years and Centre has taken leadership role in rural development, while investment in State budgets have shown decline.

(c) The Report points out that the investment in rural development by Government of India have been on the rise. For instance from Rs. 6,970 crores in Sixth Plan, investment in rural development has gone up to Rs.40,598 crores in Eight plan. During 1999-2000 allocation for rural development was Rs.9,751 crores. However, the allocation for rural development in State budgets in various States have not shown similar increase and in most States it has been declining. There is a year to year wide fluctuation in the allocation by the States.

(d) Investment in rural development is made by several Ministries like Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Justice etc. Other Ministries, like Ministry of Power, Ministry of Surface Transport and Ministry of Water Resources also make investments which benefit rural areas. Some of the investments made by these Ministries are indivisible and, therefore, can not be strictly divided and specified for rural areas.

(e) The Government of India allocation for rural development is steadily increasing over the year. In the current budget, a new scheme called Pradhan Mantri's Gramodhaya Yojana has been launched and special funds have been allocated to improve rural connectivity. Most of the Rural Development programmes have been restructure to increase the investment levels in rural

areas. One more new scheme "Annapurna' has also been introduced by the Government this year.

Plan to provide drinking water in Rajasthan

4849. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that 40 per cent of Indians have no access to drinking water at home; and

(b) if so, whether Government have any plan so that every Indian citizen can have drinking water at their places of residence and in distant areas of deserts like Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) As per the information furnished up to 1st March 2000 by the State Government's out of 1430543 rural habitations in the country, 26481 habitations are not covered, 211685 habitations are partially covered and 1192377 habitations are fully covered with access to drinking water facilities. Out of the urban population of 23.93 crore as estimated for 31st March, 1997, approximately 21.57 crore have been provided with access to drinking water facilities till 31st March, 1997.

(b) Drinking Water Supply is a State subject. The State Government implement the programme under the State Sector Minimum Need Programme (MNP). The Central Government only supplements the efforts of the States by providing funds under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). Power have been delegated to the States to plan, sanction and implement their individual rural water supply schemes.

The National Agenda for Governance of the Government envisages provision of drinking water to all rural habitations in the country in five years time. In accordance with this avowed objective all the States were requested to prepare action plan to provide drinking water to all rural habitations in five years time. Action plans in respect of all the State/UTs have been received, except A&N Islands. This objective could be achieved, subject to availability of funds. Similarly, 100% urban population is targeted to be provided with safe drinking water facilities in the Ninth Plan period, subject to availability of funds.